

CATS Newsletter

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May — June 1995

The Capital Area
Timex/Sinclair Users
Group



Playing With Internet!

by
Mark Fisher

CATS is now a pothole on the Information Superhighway! We have an E-mail account at the Edwin Pratt Free Library.

CATS members with access to the Maryland SAILOR network can log on, read up, and beam out. CATS members outside our local calling areas can get in via their local Internet access, invoking TELNET to run the E-mail program. Our account allows us to subscribe to **mailing lists**, which will allow us to keep track of the latest Sinclair developments.

If you don't have the password yet, paid up members may contact Mark Fisher, at (301) 589-7407 or Barry Washington, at (703) 256-4860.

Non-CATS members can communicate with us via E-mail, with messages to

mf0002@epfl2.epflbalto.org

I've found that SAILOR traffic is lightest weekday AM's, with sludgelike response in the early evening. I haven't run across any "official" tabulation of usage by hour and day, though it would be useful. A few scattered hints on using the available resources will be found below.

Ye old SYSOP's Addendum... Living With X-Change Mark Fisher

Upon getting past the Log-on for the Pratt E-Mail site, the user is presented with a fairly slick text-based e-mail shell known as *X-Change*. This has nothing at all to do with the QL program of the same name. There are apparently two flavors: "Classic" and "Beta." I've never been able to get anything other than Beta to run. If your VT100 terminal emulation is robust enough, you will see neatly bordered menus rolling and scrolling across the screen, and will have working cursor and function

keys with which to navigate.

The Keys Don't Work!

To digress: The ASCII character set is a wonderful thing, but it has some limitations. Over the last fifty years, a number of frills have become standard expectations - such things as cursor keys, function keys, and dedicated "delete" keys were not anticipated when the ASCII standard was defined. VT100 terminals get around this problem by sending "Escape" strings (See *Playing With PCL* in last issue) that perform the desired function. The poor Sun mainframe in Baltimore has a problem: how to distinguish VT100 escape sequences from user-typed escape sequences, used to bail out of every function in *X-Change*. The method hit upon was timing - users usually are limited in speed, while automatic escape sequences come in like a machine gun. But there are some disadvantages to operating over a state-wide network. Your signal is shunted

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A Word from the Editor:

July will be Paste-up Month, but I won't be there. I'm messing up this summer. I forgot to bring the materials for paste-up in April. Sorry. But, we can still have a paste-up session at the July meeting. Bring the articles you'd like to see in the newsletter and I'll pick them up from one of the attendees afterward.

The BBS has Moved!

SAILOR is the new home of the CATS BBS. CATS has established an E-Mail account that will be accessible via a local call to all Maryland CATS'ers, and, of course, able to receive messages from anywhere on the planet via Internet.

Our Internet address is:

mf0002@epfl2.epflbalto.org

Sailor Developments in 1995

(Lifted from "95_PLAN" on Sailor)

Sailor Telecommunication Network

Project Backbone will be completed, with most sites connected and "public" by March.

Backbone sites	
Public Phone number	OPAC access thru Sailor?
Anne Arundel County Public Library (410) 222-7100	Opac being installed
Enoch Pratt Free Library (410) 605-0500	YES
Baltimore County Public Library (410) 494-1199	YES
Carroll County Public Library (410) 848-1230	YES
Cecil County Public Library (410) 392-0909	in progress
Frederick County Public Library connection in progress	
Frostburg State University connection in progress	
Harford County Public Library (410) 638-5669	YES
Howard County Public Library (410) 730-0707	YES
Montgomery County Public Library (301) 424-4200	YES
Prince George's County Memorial Library (301) 925-2400	YES
Southern Maryland Regional Library connection in progress	
Talbot County Free Library connection in progress	
Washington County Free Library connection in progress	
Wicomico n County Free Library connection in progress	

Once Backbone is complete, the following counties will have local phone call access to Sailor because of their proximity to a host site library:

Allegany, Caroline, Charles, Queen Anne's, Somerset and Worcester.

Project Linkup will connect the following remaining counties by July 1995:

Calvert	installation early spring 1995
Dorchester	planning stage
Garrett	planning stage
Kent	planning stage
St. Mary's	installation early spring 1995

The Network Cloud Task Group continually assesses the capacity of the Network. Planning for re-sizing the Network is currently underway.

Sailor operations at the Enoch Pratt Free Library

The Help Desk is available weekdays 8:30 - 5:00. Plans for expanding hours to evenings and weekends are being made. If state funding succeeds, hours will be expanded in the summer. Currently there are 2 1/2 FTE assigned to the desk, including the manager position funded by LSCA. Sailor workstation is operated at Pratt, managed by systems staff there. Full time Sailor programmer will be on board in April. Sailor Network Technician to be hired early 1995 with LSCA funds.

Sailor database resources

New DLDS "database specialist" is working on:

- encouraging state/local agencies to open access to information resources
- convening the Sailor Editorial Group which will recommend collection development policy for gopher.
- leading efforts to expand gopher pointers to useful Internet resources
- initiating planning for access to commercial databases through Sailor
- encouraging access to I&R databases at local, state, national level

Sailor Master Trainers

Master Trainer Training (MTT) for 55 people will take place in January and February.

Systematic training of librarians statewide will start in early spring.

New DLDS "training specialist" is coordinating Sailor training in the state with the cadre of trained trainers.

Sailor Interlibrary Loan System

The Sailor ILL System is being planned, with implementation scheduled for summer 1995.

ULPM (the union list of serials) will be brought online in Maryland and made accessible via Sailor

MARC records for non-automated libraries will be brought online in Maryland and made accessible via Sailor

World Wide Web (WWW) projects

Carroll County WWW demonstration project will be operational in early 1995. Focus of this server is county resources. The public library system is working closely with county government to make available a variety of information resources. This project is funded by LSCA.

Maryland State Archives will connect to the Sailor Telecommunication Network and bring up a WWW server by spring 1995. This is the beginning of the Archives' plans to open electronic access to its resources. The project received LSCA funding.

Enoch Pratt Free Library is planning to bring up a WWW server in the first half of 1995. This is a Pratt funded initiative.

LOWDOWN ON DOWNLOADING PROBLEMS (9/16/94)

A number of DIAL-IN users have experienced difficulties downloading files from the Sailor Gopher to their microcomputers using the download options offered when <Shift + D> is pressed. Sailor systems staff *are* aware of the difficulties you have been having and will resolve the problems as soon as possible.

Until all transfer modes are working again we suggest you restrict yourself to using the following download techniques:

While viewing a document file:

E-MAIL : 1
lower case m to call up the e-mail address window.

While pointing to a file from a menu, or while viewing a file:

KERMIT:

After entering <Shift D> for Download, choose KERMIT from the list if you are accessing Sailor via one of the local toll-free Sailor Network telephone numbers (e.g., 605 - 0500 in Baltimore).

ZMODEM:

After entering <Shift D>, choose ZMODEM *if* you have telnetted to sailor.lib.md.us from a remote host (outside the epflbalto.org domain).

Thanks for your patience as we work toward getting all systems operating at 100% again.

Sailor Help Desk Staff

Spreading the Word...

Hi Mark:

Last night about 35 people attended a meeting at the Cecil County Library. Stuart Roland, Help Desk Supervisor, told us all about the network including its layout, systems, problems, what it can't do (download binary files), what it will never do. He answered many questions and seemed to be the one you can go to for any problem. He gets your number if a toll call and will call back. I didn't get to ask him about my problems, but a local guru, who was there told me that Terminal for Windows was better than BitCom. I worked with it today and it works fine -- including backspace! No Longer balky software. Hi, Hi. Tis all for now.

Best regards and CUL:

Bob Diggs

Capitol Area Timex/Sinclair User's Group
(CATS)

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through a variety of channels on its way to Baltimore, and in that process, the timing can be lost, and with it, the ability to move the cursor, invoke function keys, etc.

What to do? Try another emulator, or another machine on your end. I've seen remarkably various results from a variety of machines - everything from almost comatose word salad to near word-processor like functionality. Or use Control - Letter pairs (which are sent as unique ASCII characters) rather than the function key options given in the on screen prompts. Some most used pairs:

Ctl-Y Working sub-menu's

Ctl-O Help page on current operation

Ctl-B Bottom of list/document

Ctl-T Top of list/document

Ctl-A Add an entry to a list

The Up-Download Doesn't Work!

The Sailor HelpDesk swears that there is a working message up-download facility in X-Change. There may be, but I haven't seen it. However, there is a way around this impasse: shell out to the Operating System (OS) and invoke KERMIT directly. KERMIT comes with amazingly comprehensive help screens, as does UNIX, through its MAN command. On your end, invoke Super-Kermit if you can, for better network performance, and sit back to WAIT. It's slow.

Reply doesn't work!

Hi:

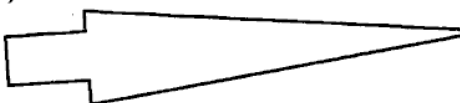
I tried to use the reply command several times. The message to me comes up on edit and I don't know how to get rid of it. If I don't the message to me will be part of the reply. Is it my software or is anyone else having trouble? I had about six messages returned to me with a message "host unknown" or something like that. Any one else have this problem -- I left one in the mail-box to look at. I wonder if we could get the library's permission to make local calls to work out some of these quirks.

Aside from return letter problems I have been able to keep in touch with son Rob in San Diego via e-mail

CUL, Bob Diggs

Bob: Believe it or not, that's a "feature." The idea is to allow you to quote a portion of the message, thereby reminding your corres-

pendent of what he/she said. Lazy folks often include the whole message, clogging arteries all over the place. Wise folks use block commands to remove unwanted portions. How? I can never remember either, so I push Control-O to get a help-list of Control-letter combinations, as seen below:



The "Host unknown" problems usually come from misspelling (lower case or upper?). I haven't looked at your particular examples.

MTF

Editor Keys	Action
<ESC>	Leave the editor.
<Ctrl-W>	Row-wise block marking.
<Ctrl-L>	Column-wise block marking.
<Ctrl-K>	Cut a marked block of text into the buffer.
<Ctrl-C>	Copy a marked block of text.
<Ctrl-P>	Paste the contents of the buffer into the editor.
<Ctrl-X>	Delete the marked block of text.
<Ctrl-F>	Search through the file for a piece of text.
<Ctrl-R>	Search and replace text in the editor.
<Ctrl-U>	Move up one page in the document.
<Ctrl-D>	Move down one page in the document.
<Ctrl-T>	Move to the top of the file.
<Ctrl-B>	Move to the bottom of the file.
<Ctrl-H>	Delete a character.
<Ctrl-M>	Insert a blank line.
<Ctrl-I>	Insert tab.
<Ctrl-G>	Toggles between text and typeover mode.
<Ctrl-A>	Toggles display of position and file size.

SINCLAIRS IN RUSSIA by Normunds Rudzi'tis

[John Pazmino captured this article from Internet's COMP.SYS.SINCLAIR room during discussions on Sinclair computers in the old Soviet Union and in today's Russia. Mr Rudzi'tis is at SD30038@LVRULV11.LANET.LV]

I do also own ZX Spectrum compatible computer, made in Russia and I think I can tell you. In fact, I own 2 ZX compats, but they are different. My first one was called 'SINTEZ', made in Kiev, and it was nicely designed and factory-made. It was nearly almost compatible with ZX [Spectrum] 48[K], although I have some games that didn't work on it (Renegade, Short Circuit). Sad things - it is broken now... (SU made things [that] didn't last long). Sintez had Kempston and Sinclair joystick ports built in, but didn't emulate port 255 properly - always returned 255. The reason probably is that the RAM in SU clones is based on 4164 clone (called K565RU5) and screen generating circuit is built in such way it can share RAM with Z80 [CPU] without wait states - and such clones work somewhat faster.

So, my ZX wasn't in working state (I forgot to tell - I purchased it for about 30 GBP [~40USD]), but ... my good friend, which dealt with ZX in our region and switched to PC later, had one ZX clone left (WOW! it was one with Beta-Disk clone) and he wanted get rid of it, so now I have some ZX again. It's different clone, called 'Leningrad' and is one of the most awful clones ever built.

1) It doesn't emulate I/O ports: all OUTs goes to port 254 (no port decoding in fact), and IN works in such way: IN with A0 reset reads port 254, IN with A0 set reads Kempston port (incompatible with original because has D5-D7 set).

2) Has a lot on-board fixes in order to work with Beta-Disk interface (it gets too warm after 4 hours of work and I shouldn't write to disk then without cooling it down before).

There are also a lot of other different clones, but none emulates ZX by 100%. Currently a board for ZX 128 clone w/BetaDisk on-board costs 40-50 GBP here [in Latvia] (a lot less in Russia), so it isn't effective to pay so lot for this crap.

Ahh, yes, about software: it's 100% pirated, usually by polish/hungarian hackers (although I suspect I have some snaps made in those countries which declares to protect copyright...) The reason is extremely simple: There is nobody selling legal spectrum games, the only way to get them legally is [to] make trip to UK (it doesn't works any more even there) and buy, paying 1/5 of average monthly salary for 1 ZX game (Any volunteers?) Just read the stuff Z80 snap owners write when somebody asks about legality of using ZX snaps on PC.

There is also a few Russia-made software, most of it relates to TR-DOS (Tape->Disk copiers, fast formatting utilities etc., but nothing really good and usable.)

Best wishes to everybody and especially to those w/ZX running at home!

L.I.S.T.'s TOP 10 reasons why Sinclair-Timex continues to live

#10:TS-1000's float when thrown overboard.

#9:Brit programs are "cute" with their spelling of words like "colour" and "energise".

#8:You can polka to the sound of a tape load into a TS-2068.

#7:Monitor jitter is good exercise for old eyes.

#6:You can save big \$ by not having to buy PC magazines.

#5:The kids that wrote ZX Spectrum game magazines are now in retirement homes.

#4:Internet users are highly amused when you sign on at 300 baud.

#3:A Sinclair QL with 20 peripheral add-ons inspired the inventor of Leggos.

#2:All of the "Lisa" type psychoanalysis programs have been merged and are now living a happy alternative life style.

#1:No waiting with eager anticipation for the new models to come out.

(With some apologies to David Letterman)

THE CAPITAL AREA TIMEX/

SINCLAIR USERS GROUP is a not-for-profit group serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Timex/Sinclair family of computers.

User Group memberships cost \$10.00 per year, are good for 12 months and include all privileges (access to software libraries, group buys, etc.).

Officers:

Chairman	Monthly position
Vice-Chairman	Monthly position
Recording Secretary	Monthly position
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Networks

internet: send article submissions (short or long) to "sfisher@capcon.net".

Timex SIG on CompuServe: Wednesday night 10:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (GO CLUB)

CATS on Internet:

Meetings:

Monthly meetings are held from 12:00 M to 4:30 PM on the second Saturday of each month at the New Carrollton Library.

mf0002@epfl2.epflbalto.org

CATS Newsletter
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FIRST CLASS MAIL



The next two meetings of CATS will be held on: July 8, 1995
(Paste up for July-August)
and ... August 12, 1995

12:00 M Hardware workshop
2:00 PM General meeting

At: New Carrollton Public Library